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CONAN THE BARBARIAN



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CONAN THE BARBARIAN!

THE GARDEN OF FEAR

FOR MANY A NIGHT AND DAY HAVE THEY TRAVERSED THE BLEAK BACK-MOUNTAIN RANGE...

NOW, A GENTLY ROLLING SLOPE LIES BEFORE THEM--AND CONAN AND THE GIRL CAN FORGET THE WEARY DAYS--THE FREEZING, BEAST-HAUNTED NIGHTS...

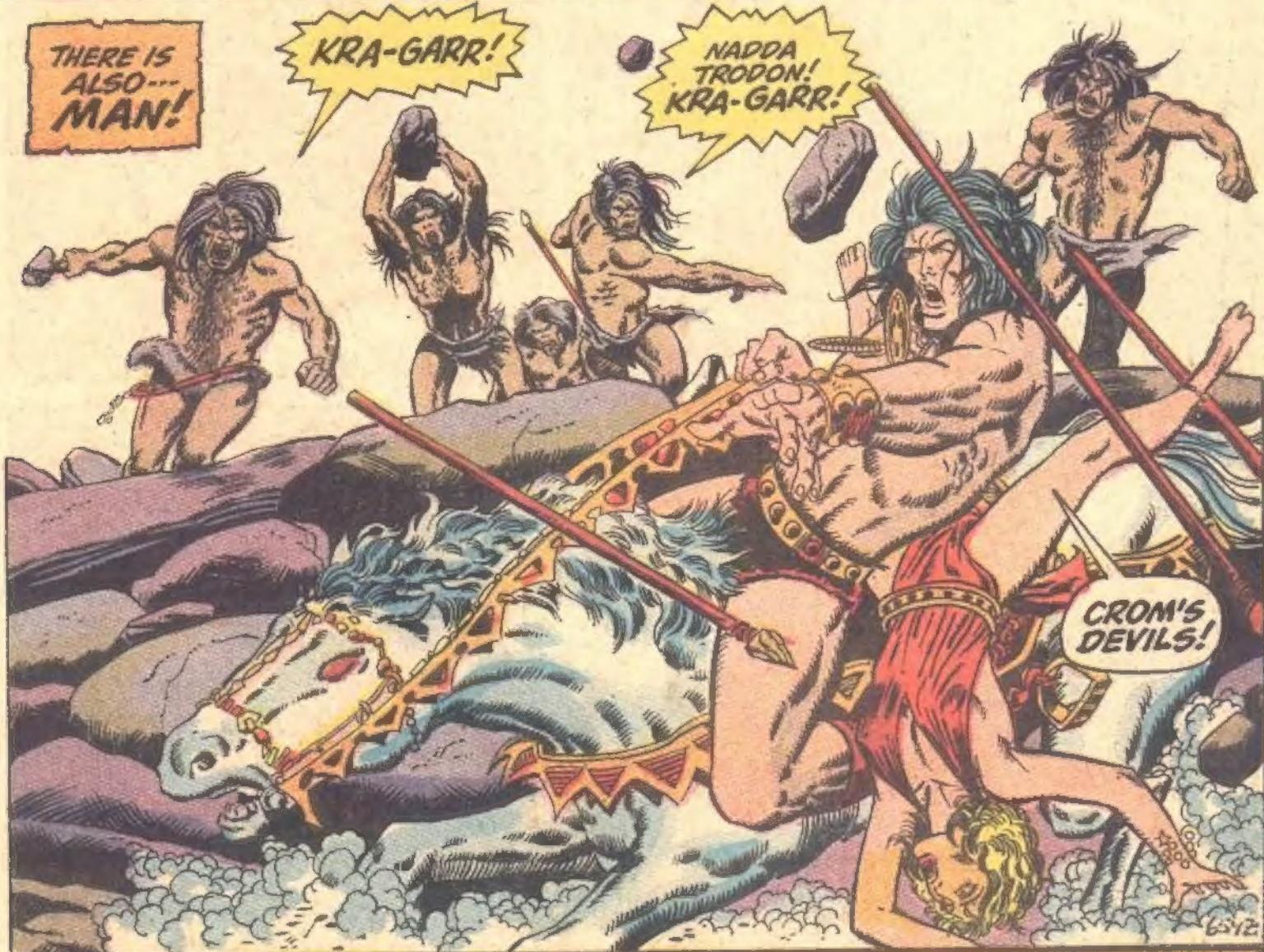
YET, THERE IS A DEADLIER FOE BY FAR THAN THE PROWLING HILL-PANTHER OR THE SCREECHING, BLACK-TALONED CONDOR---



THERE IS ALSO... MAN!

KRA-GARR!

NADDA TRODON! KRA-GARR!



STAN ROY BARRY SAL SAM
LEE * THOMAS * SMITH * BUSDEMA * ROSEN
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST EMBELLISHER LETTERER

BASED ON THE STORY
"THE GARDEN OF FEAR" By ROBERT E. HOWARD,
CREATOR OF CONAN

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THEY--THEY'VE
STOPPED
ATTACKING US!

AND--JUST
IN TIME.

NADDA KRA-GARR.
NI DIKTA.

IZTAN,
HIALMAR.

HMM... I DON'T KNOW THEIR
TONGUE -- BUT THAT MUST BE
THEIR CHIEF UP THERE.

OH, CONAN.. I'M
AFRAID-- SO AFRAID..

WADA.
MORDA
LLAMAR.

WHATEVER YOU
DO, GIRL...
DON'T SHOW
IT.

IZTAN,
HIALMAR.



IT IS STILL DARK WHEN THEY REACH THE VILLAGE -- BUT NEITHER TOO LATE, NOR TOO EARLY, FOR A FEAST --

HOW CAN YOU JUST DEVOUR THAT MEAT? IT-- IT'S NEARLY RAW.

SO IS MY HUNGER, WENCH.

BESIDES, WHAT MEAT WOULD WE BOTH HAVE GOT...

--IF THOSE CORINTHIAN SOLDIERS WHO WERE CHASING US HAD CARTED ME OFF TO PRISON -- AND YOU AS WELL, JUST FOR KNOWING ME?

I... SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.

NOW, I
MUST
LEAVE
YOU...

THEN, WITH RECKLESS ABANDON, THE CIMMERIAN THROWS HIMSELF WITH FULL FRENZY INTO THE HILLMEN'S DANCE --



YET, WHILE THE SHADOW OF NIGHT
IS STILL ON THE LAND --

THEY'RE NOT
CANNIBALS,
AT LEAST.

BUT
THEY STILL
ACT SORRY
TO SEE US GO
SO SOON.

WELL, I'M
NOT. WE'VE
GOT TO FIND
THAT HORSE,
SOMEHOW.

LOOK. HE--
WANTS TO
GIVE YOU
SOMETHING.

A ROPE--A KNIFE--AND A
FLINT TO MAKE FIRE.
MY THANKS, HIALMAR.

I WONDER IF THEY
HAVE ANY PRECIOUS
STONES FROM
THESE HILLS--?

HIDE YOUR
GREED, GIRL.
THESE ARE
SIMPLE
FOLK.

WELL, THERE'S NO HARM
IN ASKING, IS TH--

OOOH--WHERE
DID THAT WIND
SPRING FROM?

WIND?
THERE'S
BEEN NO
WIND
SINCE...

THEN: THE SUDDEN THUNDER OF
SWOOPING WINGS---

CROM!
WHAT
IN--?

A VAST DARK SHARP, RUSHING
OUT OF THE NIGHT--

--RUSHING TOWARD JENNA!

NEXT, A GREAT BUFFETING PINION
WHICH SENDS YOUNG CONAN SPRA-
ILING, AS THE GIRL IS TORN FROM
HIS SIDE--

AND THEN,
THERE IS
NAUGHT
TO DO BUT
ROAR HIS
GRIEF AND
FUTILE
FURY...

--AS THAT WINGED
SHAPE VANISHES
ONCE MORE INTO
THE HOVERING
DARKNESS--

--A WHITE, SCREAM-
ING, WRITHING FIGURE
TRAILING FROM
MIGHTY TALONS.

HELPLESS RAGE WELLING UP WITHIN HIS BREAST, CONAN FACES THE MILLING SAVAGES...

THAT WAS NO MERE CONDOR.

WHAT WAS IT? WHAT??

BUT SLOWLY, WITH SHRUGGING SHOULDERS, THEY TURN THEIR BACKS ON HIM - SILENT BUT FOR A SINGLE WORD...

GARAKAA!

"GARAKAA"
--THE NAME
FOR THAT
WHICH LIVES
BEYOND
THE CLIFFS.

AND-- THE WAY
THEY RETURN,
LISTLESS, TO THEIR
FIRES...

--AS IF
THIS HAD HAPPENED
TO THEM BEFORE
AND WOULD HAPPEN
AGAIN.

BUT
THIS TIME
--IT HAPPENED
TO ME!

THE LAST SHADOWS OF NIGHT ENWRAP THE VILLAGE...
AND NONE WITHIN LOOK BACK, SAVE ONLY HIALMAR...

AND AFTER A WHILE, ONE OF THE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE BEGINS HOARSLY TO CHANT--

--THE DEATH-DIRGE OF THE HILLS.

BUT CONAN THINKS NO MORE OF WHAT IS LEFT BEHIND, BUT ONLY OF WHAT MAY LIE AHEAD...

--AS, WITH THE FIRST FAINT GLOW OF DAWN, HE REACHES THE FIRST OF TWO BROAD VALLEYS--

IT IS A SIMPLE THING TO DESCEND THE DEW-SPECKED SLOPE, INTO THE VERDANT FOREST...



BUT WHAT CAN KEEP THE HILL-MEN OUT OF THIS VALLEY-- CRINKING IN THE CRAGS ABOVE...



AND THEN, CONAN SEES THEM...



--GREAT-TUSKED BEASTS THAT GRUNT AND BELLOW IN THE EARLY MORNING CHILL-- HAIRY MOUNTAINS OF FLESH AND BONE AND MUSCLE --

YET, CONAN WASTES LITTLE TIME PONDERING IF THESE BE ELEPHANTS, OR SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY...



FOR, HIS EYES AND MIND ARE FOCUSED ON THE ONE THING WHICH HOLDS MEANING FOR HIM...



...THE POINT BEYOND THE FORAGING BEHEMOTHS, THAT PLACE WHERE THE SKY-TOWERING CLIFFS DO NOT QUITE CONVERGE ...

A POINT REACHABLE
ONLY BY WALKING
DIRECTLY THRU THE
VERY MIDST OF THE
GREAT TUSKERS.

SOFTLY HE GOES
--LIKE ONE WHO
TREADS THE WINGS
OF BUTTERFLIES---

BUT THE
MAN-
SCENT
IS UPON
HIM---

AND SO...

THE GREAT GOD CROM
LIVES IN A FAR-OFF
MOUNTAIN, AND MEEDLES
NOT IN THE AFFAIRS OF
MERE MEN --

BUT, THAT MOMENT
SWIFTLY PASSES, AS --

SO, IT'S
EITHER HUG
THE CLIFFS,
OR --

SATISFIED,
OLD SNIFFER?

I'M NOT ONE
WHO WOULD
HARM YOU---
IF HE COULD.

YOU'RE IN
THAT SECOND
VALLEY,
AREN'T YOU,
JENNA?

SOMEHOW,
I KNOW
YOU ARE.

BUT I CAN'T
WALK ON
WATER TO
YOUR SIDE.

YET SURELY SOME-
ONE HAS STOOD AT
HIS SHOULDER THIS
DAY... AND FOR A
MOMENT, CONAN
WONDERS WHO...

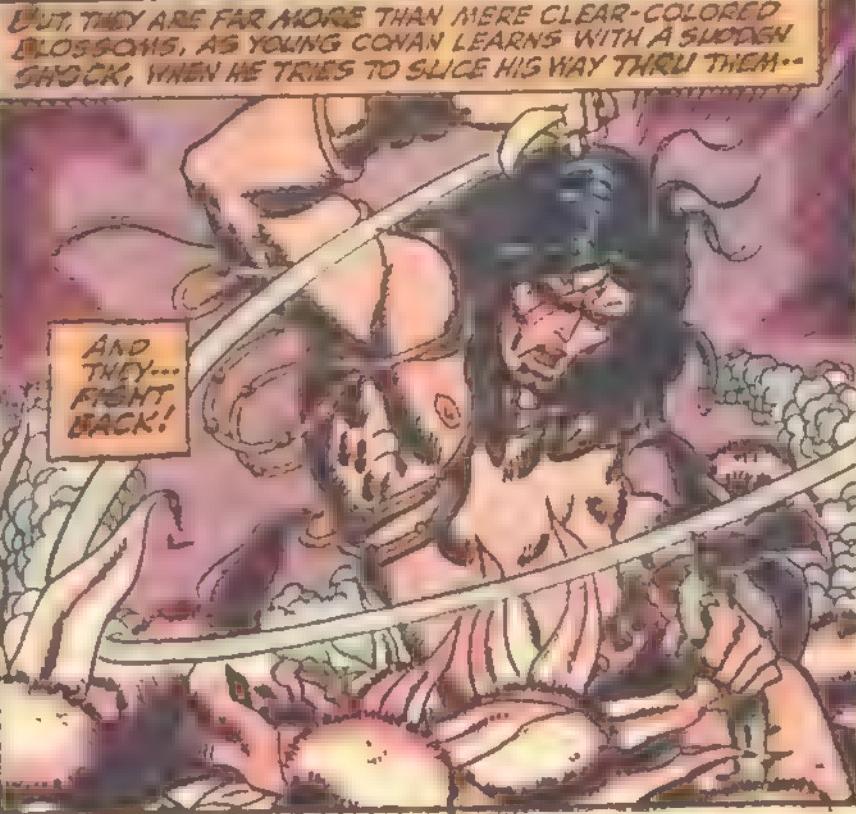
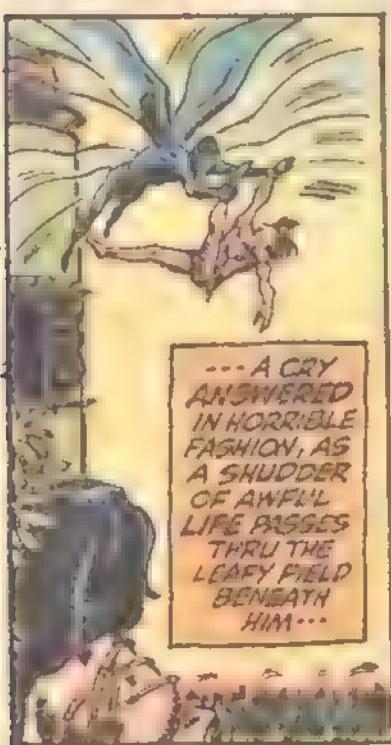
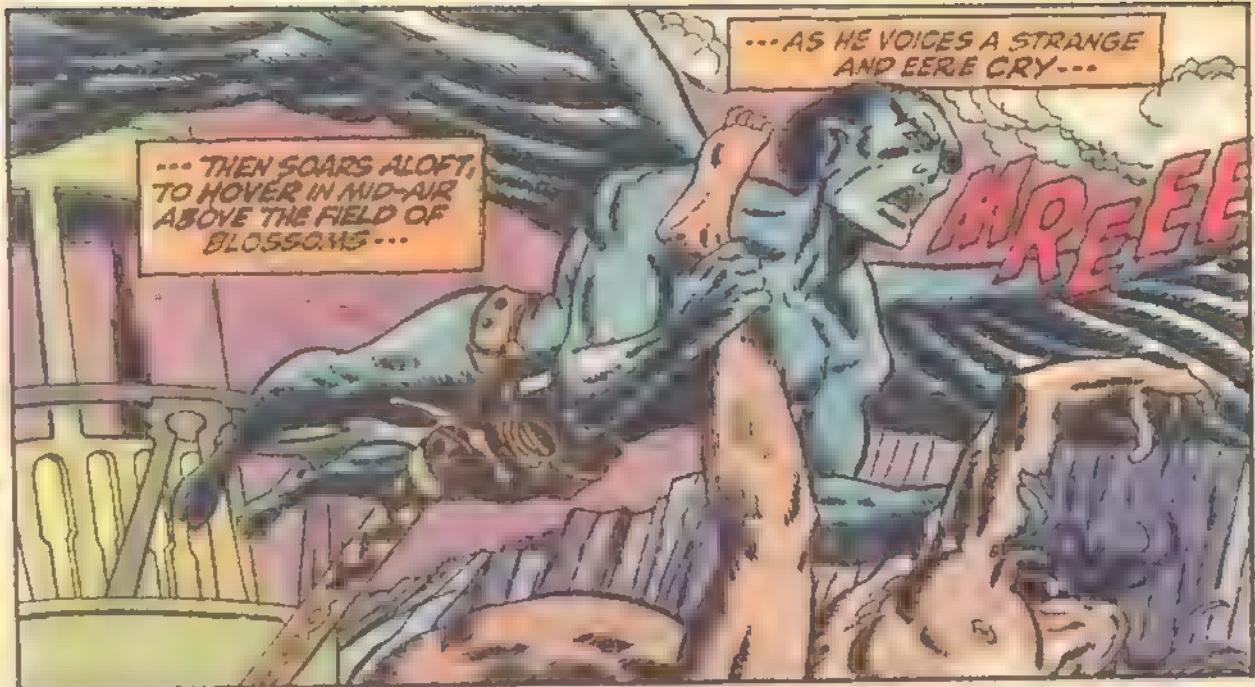




HAWKLIKE,
HE SURVEYS
HIS LOST
DOMAIN IN
THE PRE-DAWN
GLOW---
TAKING NO
NOTICE OF
THE MOTION-
LESS MAN
BELOW...



THE WINGED ONE
SPREADS BROAD WINGS...



WHAT KIND OF MADNESS INFESTS THIS VALLEY?

I COME HERE TO SAVE A GIRL FROM A BIRD-- A GIANT CONDOR, PERHAPS....



...AND I FIND A BLACK-WINGED DEVIL FLOWERS THAT FORM A SOLID WALL AGAINST ME...

EH? THE SCREAMING HAS-- STOPPED.

TEN, STEELY BLUE EYES WIDEN-- EYES WHICH HAVE SEEN APES WALK LIKE MEN, AND BEHELD GREY-CLOAKED GODS STRIDING THRU STORMY SKIES...

...AS CONAN LEARNS THE GRIM ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION WHICH RISES, INVOCED, TO HIS LIPS...

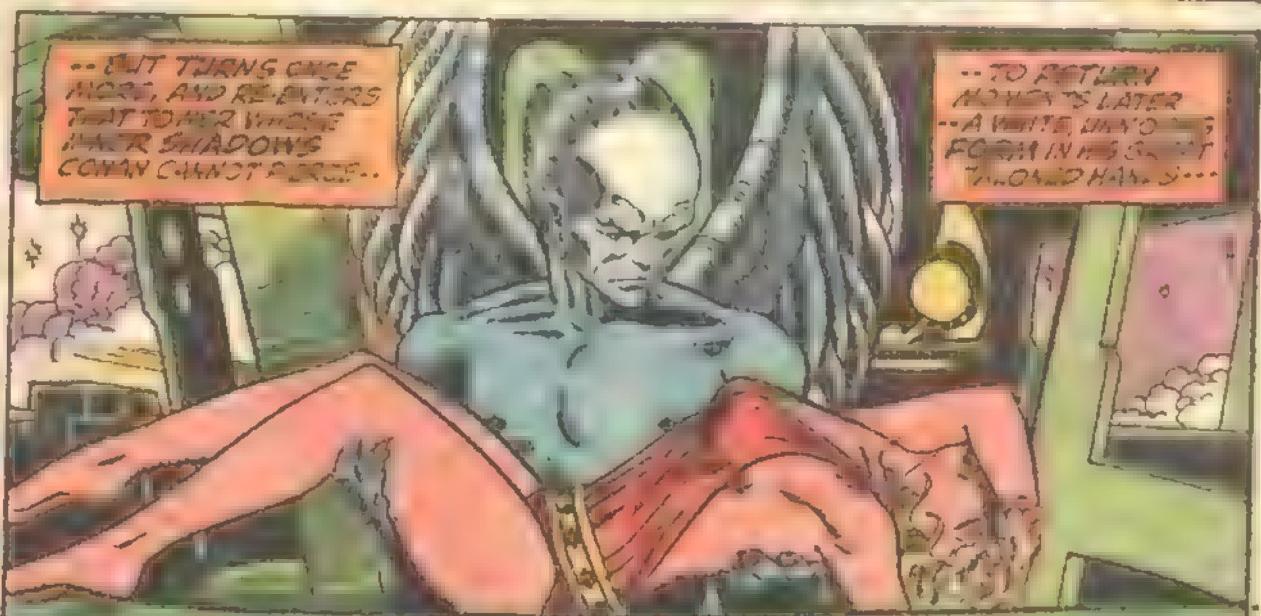
...I FEEL MY TEARS ARE ALL DRIED UP NO MORE.



CROM! IF I HAD RUSHED RIGHT IN--

HUHN?! WHAT'S THAT SOUND-- FROM ABOVE--?

THE WINGED ONE!



-- BUT TURNING ONCE MORE, AND RE-ENTERING THAT TOWER WHERE HAIR SHADOWS COULD CANNOT FORCE...

-- TO RETURN MOMENTS LATER A WHITE UNDINE FORMED IN AIR, THE WORDS HAD...

...WHICH HE HOLDS
OVER THE RAILING'S
EDGE, AS HE UTTERS
A TAUNTING SHOUT,
IN A LANGUAGE NO
HUMAN TONGUE
COULD EVER MASTER...

MMRRNN
NDRRRM!

JENNA!

CONAN!
OH CONAN--
PLEASE--

HELP
ME!
HELP
ME!

I ... CAN'T--!

ONCE, THE MAN-
DEMON MAKES
AS IF TO CAST
HER DOWN
AMONGST THOSE
MURDEROUS
THORNS---

--AND ONLY IRON
CONTROL KEEPS
CONAN FROM
PLUNGING INTO THAT
RED SEA OF HELL!

BUT, 'TWAS A
NERE GESTURE
... THE PLAYING
OF CAT WITH
MOUSE BEFORE
THE KILL...

AND THE YOUNG BAR-
BARIAN CAN DO NO-
THING ... NOTHING
SAVE SWALLOW THE
PANTHERISH RAGE
WITHIN HIM ...

...NOTHING
SALE TURN HIS
BACK...

--AND STRIDE
OFF TOWARD
THE FOREST.

LITTLE DODGERS
CAROUSEL, THE
WINDS FLEES
AFTER HIM...

...SEES HIM
PASS A NEW
FROM THIS
VALLEY INTO
THE OTHER...

...YET
CLANGERS
THIS TIME
ALONG THE
ROCKS
WHICH
LINE THE
STREAM...

...T'LL HE REACHES ONCE MORE THAT DRY-GRASS VALE WHERE
LUMBER MONSTERS WHO DWARF THE DARK-WINGED DEMON...

YOU TUSKERS
SHOULD AFFRIGHT
ME FAR MORE
THAN HE...
BUT YOU DON'T.

MAYBE
IT'S BECAUSE
HE'S SO LIKE A
MAN-- AND YET,
SO STRANGELY
UNLIKE.

BUT YOU
WOULDN'T FEAR
THE WINGED ONE,
WOULD YOU?

NO, THERE IS
BUT ONE THING
YOU WOULD
FEAR...

ONE THING
IN ALL THE
WORLD...

AND NOW A LIVING RAVINE
OF FLAME SLIPS THE
VALLEY... DRIVING BEFORE IT
A CRUSH AND HURRICANE OF
FLESH... A MILLION TONS
EARTHQUAKE OF BONES
BONES AND MUSCLE...

FIRE!

...A STAMPEDE
LIKE THE LAST
OF JOURNAMENT
DAY. THE CLOUDS
WAK AND
STAMPEDE...

THRU THE WATERY GAP BETWEEN THE VALLEYS THEY THUNDER...

BEHIND THEM, THE FIRE WHICH ROARS LIKE AN EARTH-CONSUMING STORM...

--AND THE FRAIL MANLING, FORGOTTEN BY THE TITANS IN THEIR HEADLONG FLIGHT--

--YET TREADING HARD UPON THE LEVIATHAN HILLS!

TREES ARE UPROOTED, DENSE THICKETS LEVELED... AS THE GREAT GREEN TOWER LOOMS IN VIEW...

A LONE BEHEMOTH MIGHT BE PULLED DOWN BY THE DEVIL-PLANTS -- DESTROYED -- DEVOURED -- BUT, BEFORE THE WHOLE RAMPAGING HERD, THEY ARE NO MORE THAN... FLOWERS...

AND THEN---THE TOWER ITSELF!

AROUND IT, YOU BRUTES! GO AROUND THE TOWER!

BY THE GODS, IF THEY KNOCK IT DOWN---

JENNA...

THE WINGED MAN SEEKS
TO SHARE THE OUTLANDER'S
FEARS....

THEN, AS FUR-TOPPED
MOUNTAINS COME TO
REST BY A NOT-
DISTANT LAKE....

HOLD
FAST, GIRL.
YOU'VE BEEN
THRU TEN KINDS
OF HELL THE
NIGHT JUST
PAST.

STILL, A
FEW HOURS
IN THE GLOW
OF THE SUN
WILL...

YET, THE TOWER MERELY
SHUDDERS--- AND
STANDS FIRM!

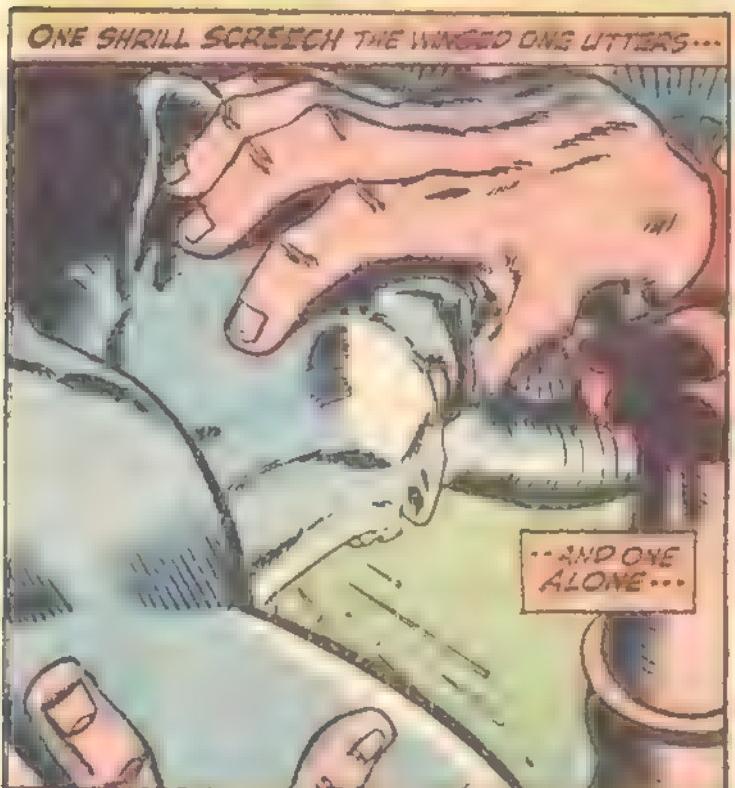
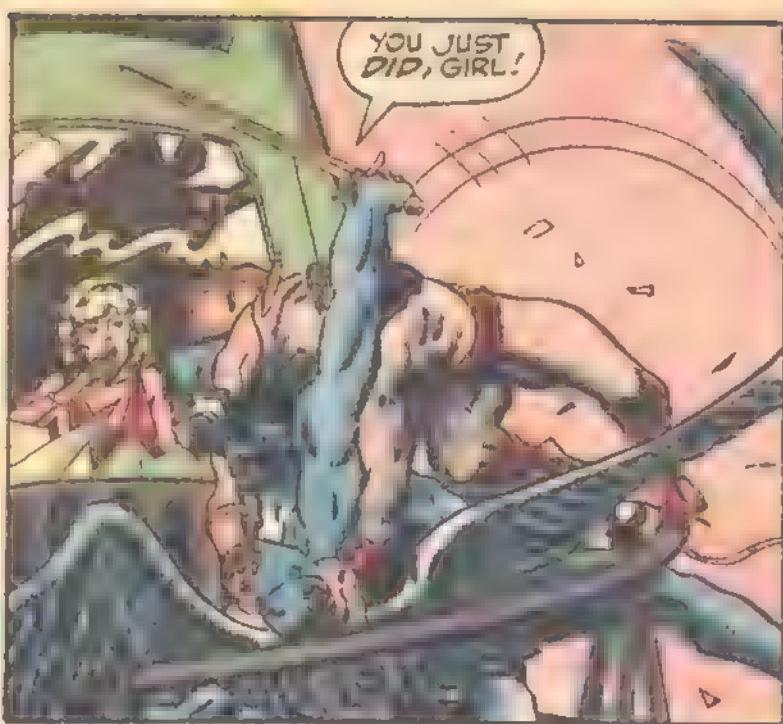
CROM!

I DON'T
KNOW YOUR
WORDS,
DEVIL...

RRRMMNN
RRRNMMMM!

--BUT YOUR
ACTS CRY
LOUDLY
ENOUGH!

CONAN--??



QUESTIONS:
THERE ARE 50
MANY
QUESTIONS...

QUESTIONS THE WINGED ONE
ALONE COULD ANSWER...

QUESTIONS WHICH
WOULD FALL LIKE THE
SUDDEN RAIN FROM
THE LIPS OF CIVILIZED
MEN--OF SCHOLARS...

--BUT NOT FROM
CONAN'S!



WHAT IS IT,
LIKE, TO BE
THE LONE
SURVIVOR
OF A LEGEND-
BIRTHING RACE?

HOW DID IT
FEEL TO SEE
ATLANTIS AND
LEMURIA RISE
FROM THE MIRE
OF SAVAGERY,
BECOME MIGHTY
EMPIRES...

--ONLY TO SINK AT LAST,
ENGULFED BY MAN-
HUNGERING SEAS---

--AND YOU
ALONE
ALWAYS--
ALWAYS,
ALWAYS
ALONE--



QUESTIONS: THERE ARE SO
MANY QUESTIONS....



QUESTIONS WHICH SHALL NEVER
BE ASKED!



JENNA... THE
WINGED ONE...
IS HE...?



I... I WAS SO
AFRAID, CONAN.
IF THAT CREATURE
HAD SLAIN YOU...

-- YOU'D HAVE
CHARMED HIM,
SOONER OR LATER,
INTO WAITING YOU
OUT OF THIS VALLEY.



DON'T
CRY,
GIRL.

IT'S NOT
THE FIRST
TIME A
WINGED
DEVIL
CARRIED
YOU OFF!



THE HYBORIAN PAGE

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Dear People:

Your adaptation of Howard's "The Tower of the Elephant", in issue #4, was both a wonderful graft from one medium to the other, and a sheer joy in artwork. I was sufficiently impressed to warrant buying four copies—a high compliment, on my paycheck.

So far, you've kept to one-issue stories and done consistently well. Let's see how Thomas and Smith can carry off one of Howard's longer novelettes, such as "The People of the Black Circle," or perhaps "Beyond the Black River." An original line developed over three or more issues would be worth trying, too.

Conan #5 was also well done; I hope that going monthly won't result in a decrease in quality. However, one point needs mentioning at length: At the end of "Zukala's Daughter," you have the wizard vanishing with his lovestruck daughter, threatening dire vengeance upon the Cimmerian. A recurring enemy is a good way to boost sales, true, and I've no objection to Zukala taking running snipes at Conan now and then (although, as I recall, the only fairly regular foe he had was Thoth-Amon of the Ring). But I notice an ominous hint (hopefully mere paranoia on my part) of a romantic involvement between Conan and Zephra. Now, a resident nemesis, as I said, I'll go along with reservedly . . . but I am strongly opposed to any sustained sub-plots involving unrequited love. They work well to excellently in your other magazines, but in CONAN they would be disastrous, pure and simple.

Michael Reaves, 2986 Turrill
San Bernardino, Calif. 92405

We totally agree, Mike. Thus, even the current relationship between Conan and Jenna will doubtless peter out one of these issues—in a way we know Robert E. Howard would have approved of. (As to how we know this—well, stick around, astute one, and we'll prove it beyond the shadow of a doubt.)

It'll be some time before Roy and Barry reach the later Conan tales in their rhapsodic re-tellings, but in the meantime they have a two-part original story planned for an early pair of issues—one part based upon an authentic yarn by REH, the other an original Thomas/Smith collaboration. Kind of whets the appetite, eh?

Dear Stan, Roy, and Barry,

CONAN #5 was a bit of a letdown after #4. Here, I think, is why:

Frank Giacoia is too brutal an inker for Barry's delicate pencils. In #4, Sal Buscema sensitively enhanced Barry's drawings, and the result (along with some incredible coloring) was Barry's career peak in artistic achievement—but only so far.

Aside from the disappointing artwork—and note that I attribute that wholly to Giacoia—CONAN #5 was another masterpiece. Roy's writing was never more crisp or suspenseful—qualities which are always lacking in Stan's scripts (and which no amount of glibness veneer can completely cover). I particularly enjoyed Conan's exclamation, "Do doors mean nothing in this place?"

CONAN is easily your (Marvel's) best work. But please, if you can't get Sal back to ink it, then have Palmer and Giacoia switch off between DAREDEVIL and CONAN. And thanks for making the Cimmerian monthly!

Michael Barson, Box 31, Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Me. 04011

Our pleasure, lad. But now, if we can brush aside poor Stan for a moment (while's he's trying in vain to smile thru his glib veneer of tears), we thought we'd best comment on your criticism of the artwork. Perhaps it's just that you don't like

fearless Frank's inking period—but there was another factor on CONAN #8 of which you are doubtless unaware.

Namely, our first half dozen or so issues of conan were dialogue-scripted, inked, and printed out of order from the way Barry did them. Just for the record, here is the order in which our bashful Britisher penciled the first eight Conan comic-book tales: #1, #2, #5, (!), #4, #3, #7, #6, then the adaptation in SAVAGE TALES #1. Does that clear up any mysteries, Michael?

Interestingly, a goodly number of Marvel's top inkers have had a crack at CONAN in these first few issues: Dan Adkins, Sal Buscema, Frank Giacoia (who's still tops in our book), Tom Sutton, Tom Palmer. And this issue was to add another star to that sky: reckless Reed Crandall, one of the Golden-Age greats of the comics world. However, one of those ever-capricious deadline problems arose, and speed-demon Sal Buscema came to our rescue. Maybe one of these first few issues, huh, Reed?

(Meanwhile, Mr. Crandall's legion of fans can thrill to his first Marvel masterpiece in over a decade in the latest issue of CREATURES ON THE LOOSE—now on sale—as he pen-and-links a werewolf tale to end 'em all! Miss it not!)

Dear Stan, Roy, and Barry,

I'm not one who usually writes letters of praise, but CONAN #5 gave me so much enjoyment that I had to write. After seeing some of Barry's Kirby/Steranko imitations, I became one of his most ardent critics. I became so prejudiced against his art that I find it hard now to believe that I am writing in praise of it. It seems, however, that Barry is finally coming into his own, and his art now is more sophisticated than even the King's was at a comparable time. Three improvements are evident to me: (1) His toning down of the exaggerated proportions of limbs which seemed to go Kirby one better; (2) his better grasp of layouts; and (3) the very good use of shadows, which is just perfect for a mag like CONAN. Another improvement is the wealth of detail present in his drawings, which is proof of the effort he has obviously put into the mag.

Nor are Barry's efforts the only ones evident; Roy's efforts to make CONAN a great mag are also in evidence. In fact, I don't recall so much care being given to the production of any comic-mags since the Thomas/Adams/Palmer teamup in the X-MEN series. I realize there might be technical problems, but please, if at all possible, try a Smith/Palmer teamup on art. It can't miss.

Harry S. Fung, University of Calif.
Berkeley, Calif. 94703

It didn't, friend—at least, not in the handful of pages which titanic Tom Palmer inked of our last issue when inker Tom Sutton (don't get 'em confused, now!) got slowed down a bit and Mr. P. came to his (and our) rescue. Incidentally, is there any eagle-eyed CONAN fanatic out there who can tell us which four or five pages Tom Palmer inked in issue #8? We'll give you one small hint; they're not all in order, and they're neither at the very beginning nor at the tail-end of the mag. Happy hunting, Hyborophiles!

MIGHTY
MARVEL
IS ON THE MOVE
AGAIN!!

THIS IS THE MONTH OF...
RED WOLF!

...IN
MARVEL
SPOTLIGHT
#1
NOW ON
SALE!